



United States Air Force

ONLINE news

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NEWSBYTES

AF tackles low retention

The Air Force will develop a game plan to combat declining retention rates during a summit Jan. 19-21 at the Pentagon.

The Retention Summit 2000 features officer and enlisted participants from all major commands, Air National Guard, Air Force Personnel Center and the Air Staff. Among those speaking are Undersecretary of the Air Force Carol DiBattiste and Lt. Gen. Donald Peterson, Air Force deputy chief of staff for personnel.

The findings and recommendations from the summit will become the baseline for developing Air Force Retention Game Plan 2000—designed to create a positive shift in retention rates. The summit findings will be further validated by a series of focus groups to be held at bases in the United States and Europe.

Rostker nominated

Army Undersecretary Bernard D. Rostker has been nominated to fill the position of Defense Department undersecretary for personnel and readiness upon the departure of incumbent Undersecretary Rudy de Leon. Mr. de Leon has been recommended to become deputy secretary of defense. Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen made the announcement Jan. 13. In his current position, Mr. Rostker is the Army's No. 2 civilian leader. He serves as the deputy and senior advisor to the Army secretary and is acting secretary in the absence of the secretary.

Revised feedback forms

Revised performance feedback worksheets are available for immediate use.

However, effective Feb. 1, it will be mandatory for all raters to use the revised PFWs (AF Forms 724a, 724b, 931 and 932) when conducting feedback sessions. The pre-printed publishing identification date at the bottom of the new forms is 20000101 (ef-v1).

A single, compelling theme

■ AF identity, symbol in transition

By Senior Airman

A.J. Bosker

Headquarters

United States Air Force

WASHINGTON — As the Air Force continues its transition to the expeditionary aerospace force, it is focusing its identity to help with recruiting and retention in the new millennium.

As part of this effort, officials said they are working to establish a single, compelling theme and symbol to represent the Air Force to its members and the public.

"We want to ensure our core identity is part of our culture and is understood by our own people and the citizens we serve," said Gen. Michael E. Ryan, Air Force chief of staff. "As we enter the 21st century, our identity—who we are, what we do and what we believe—will represent both our heritage and our future.



U.S. AIR FORCE

Artist's rendition of the proposed United States Air Force logo.

"We know who we are and what we do," he said. "We want others to know, and we want them to support our Air Force."

Secretary of the Air Force Whit Peters said, "We know Air Force men and women take great pride in what they do. Our identity effort crystallizes what they're thinking. It will foster unity in the Air Force and help the American public understand the worthy work we do—from

fighting the nation's wars to peacekeeping to humanitarian relief."

How is the Air Force determining how to express its identity? "By doing a lot of research," Col. Ron Rand, Air Force director of public affairs, explained.

With the help of a private corporate identity firm, Siegel & Gale, the Air Force spent the past year conducting research among the ser-

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Major faces article 32 hearing

■ Dover AFB officer refuses anthrax vaccine; declines Article 15

DOVER AIR FORCE BASE, Del. — An officer assigned here faces an Article 32 hearing on a charge of willfully disobeying a lawful order to be inoculated with the anthrax vaccine.

A single charge was preferred against Maj. Sonnie Bates, Jan. 14, by Col. Mark S. Solo, 436th Operations Group commander. Major Bates was charged with violating Article 90 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice for failing to obey a lawful order from a superior

commissioned officer.

Major Bates declined nonjudicial punishment (Article 15, UCMJ), Jan. 7, and requested trial by court-martial.

Col. S. Taco Gilbert III, 436th Airlift Wing commander, directed the Article 32 hearing be held to review the charge. Col. David Brash, a military judge with the Western Circuit Judiciary, Travis AFB, Calif., is the investigating officer. A formal hearing date has been tentatively set for Jan. 24.

An Article 32 hearing has the elements of and is similar to a civilian preliminary hearing and grand jury process. The hearing will inquire into the truth of the matter set forth in the charge,

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Letters to the editor

U.S. Air Force Online News publishes letters based on their appeal to an Air Force-wide audience each week. Send your letter to the U.S. Air Force Online News staff by completing the online form at <http://www.af.mil/newspaper/>

Due to the number of letters, not all letters can be published. Letters may be edited for grammar and length. Only letters accompanied by a valid name and email address will be considered.

Out of tune

It's hard to get fired up about a 4.8 percent pay raise when some of our airmen will face a 24 percent cut in BAH. The rate protection sermon being preached means nothing to those who must PCS into an area with reduced rates. I agree, BAH should be increased for high-cost areas, but not at the expense of everyone else ... The new rates are so far out of tune with actual housing costs in our area and no bean-counting formula can convince me otherwise ...

Senior Master Sgt. Dale Lamell
F. E. Warren AFB, Wyo.

Our reality

For us who write out a monthly mortgage or rent check, our reality is that housing costs increase yearly ... It looks like the best time to PCS into a base is in December. Then, despite living in the same real housing world as those who sign into a base in January, you get to reap the benefits (rate protection or increase if one occurs) of living in the statistical world of BAH rates.

Maj. Tom Mazaika
FAA Technical Center, Atlantic City, NJ

Price of freedom

I agree with [Cynthia] Minnick [National defense: not worth dignifying? Jan. 12]. Many people I know have no idea the price that was paid for the freedoms we enjoy ... I intend to ensure my newborn son understands why he can enjoy freedom and why he is safe each night. He may choose military life or not, but at least he will understand the price of freedom ...

1st Lt. Michael Hall
Sheppard AFB, Texas

Recognizing the problem

Kudos to someone at last being upfront ... ["Recruiting and retention," Jan. 12] and stating the reason the service missed its recruiting goal is a booming economy. Until all Air Force leaders recognize the best recruiter is everyone who wears or has worn Air Force blue, the [service] will continue to miss their recruiting goal. Leadership must recognize its own people are a solution to sustaining the enlisted force ...

Master Sgt. Larry Coles
Retired

BAH ♦ TRICARE ♦ Quality of Service ♦ EAF ♦ Pay Raise ♦ Good People

New year holds unprecedented opportunity for USAF, airmen

By F. Whitten Peters, *secretary of the Air Force*,
and Gen. Michael E. Ryan, *Air Force chief of staff*

The year 2000 came in quietly, at least with respect to Y2K concerns, but it ushered in unprecedented opportunity for our Air Force family – both in job satisfaction and compensation for a job well done.

The National Defense Authorization and Appropriation Acts for fiscal 2000 provide Air Force people solid improvements in quality of life through a 4.8 percent pay raise, flight pay for enlisted air crew members, expanded bonuses for pilots, increased enlistment and reenlistment bonuses, and 50 percent retirement.

The good news doesn't stop there. Recently, the Secretary of Defense announced a major initiative to improve Basic Allowance for Housing. Beginning this year and continuing through 2005, you will receive increases in BAH that will eliminate the out-of-pocket costs you incur to live in quality housing. This increase is part of an overall quality of life program that will also improve single-member dormitories and on-base family housing through new construction and privatization.

TRICARE is also a high priority in 2000 — not just for those of us in uniform, but for our families and retirees as well. The quality of care provided is good but we have to take steps to improve access to quality medical care while

reducing the red tape involved.

We know that ensuring stability in your lives is just as important as pay and benefits, and as 2000 progresses you will see more and more the positive effects created by the Expeditionary Aerospace Force. Knowing to which Aerospace Expeditionary Force you are assigned will put predictability back in your life. You will know well in advance when you're scheduled to be on call for deployment. And when you deploy, it will be as part of a team, which will increase unit cohesion, productivity and morale.

We are also working to ensure you have the tools and training you need to do your job — what we call quality of service. It means providing you with the same level of excellence in equipment as we expect from you in terms of performance, whether you're handling an aircraft, a computer or a torque wrench.

Finally, we must continue to attract good people. We're introducing major initiatives to enhance our recruiting effort. We are significantly increasing the number of recruiters, expanding the amount of training they receive and increasing advertising aimed at potential recruits. And we are going to improve the bonuses for hard-to-fill skills.

The quality of our Air Force people — military and civilian — is without peer. You prove your dedication and commitment to the mission every single day, and we truly appreciate all you do for our nation. Your Air Force leadership team is focused on doing what's right for the Air Force...and that means doing what's right for you. It's our top priority, this year and always.



DEERS, RAPIDS migration

■ Corrective actions to limit errors

By Staff Sgt. Cynthia Miller
Headquarters
United States Air Force

WASHINGTON – Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System program managers are taking action to limit the number of record and database errors during the transition to new DEERS and Real-time Automated Personnel Identification Systems.

As with any new program, however, there are bound to be "hiccups." According to Ed Haldeman, DEERS and RAPIDS program manager, transition between the old and new systems may cause problems with information flow.

To combat potential problems, extensive customer service mechanisms have been put in place to immediately fix errors so entitlements are never in jeopardy during conversion. In many cases, problems are fixed in a few minutes.

Largely unchanged since implementation in 1980, the DEERS database records benefit and privilege eligibility for all servicemembers and their families, and RAPIDS is one of several applications that provides input to DEERS.

To keep pace with technology, and better respond to changes in legislation, DEERS and RAPIDS were redesigned for migration to the new system in 1997, said

The DEERS database identifies benefit and privilege eligibility, including

medical services, for all service members and their families. The transfer of Personnel records to the new system has been completed and program managers are now in the process of migrating medical information.



program officials.

The transition to the new RAPIDS software was completed in August 1999, while the migration to a system that will include DEERS responses to TRICARE and other health care activities is underway, they said.

"For a large mainframe system to have been around that long with nothing but patches made it obvious that we had to do some serious and quick changes to the database and its applications," said Mr. Haldeman.

The following regional toll-free hotlines have been set up to assist service members with DEERS-related problems. They are open from 6 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. PST:

California: 1-800-334-4162

Hawaii: 1-800-527-5602

All other Locations: 1-800-538-9552.

Identity theft

Military members aren't immune

WASHINGTON – With the advances in technology, identity theft has been on the rise and military members are not immune from this potentially credit-wrecking outbreak.

According to Air Force Office of Special Investigations officials, although there have only been a few incidents involving Air Force members, the

threat is alive and everyone needs to be aware of how disastrous the results could be.

Identity theft occurs when someone gains key pieces of information about another person for the purpose of establishing a line of credit. Thieves will typically open new bank accounts, apply for loans and credit cards, and purchase vehicles under the assumed identity.

Although financial institutions are the prime targets of identity thieves, the damage done to the individual whose identity has been stolen is often irreparable.

This entire article and some preventive measures available to preclude people from being victimized by identity theft are available online.



If you feel you may have been a victim of stolen identity, contact one of the major credit bureaus:

Equifax:
1-800-525-6285
Trans Union:
1-800-680-7289
Experian:
1-888-397-3742

Major faces Article 32 hearing

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consider the form of the charge, and make recommendations as to the disposition of the case in the interest of justice and discipline.

Additionally, the hearing gives Major Bates an opportunity to see the evidence against him and present any evidence he deems important for consideration. Major Bates has the right to be present at the hearing and be represented by counsel. At the end of this investigation, Colonel Brash will recommend a course of action to Colonel Gilbert.

Colonel Gilbert will make a decision concerning whether the charge against Major Bates

will be dismissed, sent to a special court-martial, or forwarded to Maj. Gen. John D. Hopper, 21st Air Force commander, for general court-martial consideration. General Hopper is the general court-martial convening authority in this case. Among the factors Colonel Gilbert and General Hopper may consider in their decision is the importance of military members obeying the lawful orders of their superiors, the critical relationship between obedience and good order and discipline, and the fundamental obligation of every military member to obey lawful orders.

This article is available in its entirety online.

Check this out online

www.af.mil/newspaper

Harassment in the armed forces continues to be a subject of scrutiny. The Air Force's top two leaders are letting it be known such behavior will not be tolerated in the service.

Access to some financial and personnel record services is only a click away when the Defense Finance and Accounting Service activates the Employee/Member Self-Service program this year. In a separate article, finance officials eliminated a backlog of entitlement payments affecting 10,000 people.

Finally, W-2s, which should be to you by Jan. 29, are in the mail. Go to your base finance office if it's MIA.



Single theme: AF identity, symbol in transition

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vice and the public to capture the common elements of its identity that have great meaning to bind its people together.

The Air Force committed approximately \$150,000 to research internal and external audiences to determine current understanding and beliefs held about the Air Force, and approximately \$655,000 to hire Siegel & Gale to help interpret the research and ensure its identity is effectively communicated to Air Force members and potential recruits.

"Since last February, we've conducted seven surveys, held 68 focus groups and interviewed 13 retired four-star generals and 110 other people," Col. Rand said. "We've taken input from about 10,000 people. Of this number, 7,500 were enlisted members, officers, and civilians in the active force, Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve. The other 2,500 were members of the general public."

This extensive research was used to find strengths and weaknesses in Air Force identity, Col. Rand said. "We found that our people generally feel allegiance to the unit they belong to and to their job, more than they feel part of one big organization."

Research also showed that instead of one unifying theme, the Air Force has many different ways of expressing its identity, he said. In addition, there was little consistency in the visual representation of the Air Force.

"If you look at our base welcome signs, you don't get as much a sense of the Air Force as you do of the units behind the gates," he said. "The same applies to our aircraft, our newspapers and home pages, and even our uniforms."

"Unless you have really good eyes and can read the U.S. Air Force tape on someone's battle dress uniform, you may not know what service he or she represents," he said. "As for our aircraft, which are seen by millions of people, the tail markings tend to represent the wing and the command. You have to look pretty hard to

see U.S. Air Force on our aircraft."

To overcome these inconsistencies, Siegel & Gale identified the four prevailing themes that emerged from the research: individual achievement, intelligence and technology, core values, and mission. They recommended the focus of the identity be the vital mission the Air Force performs around the world, because it was the theme that surfaced with the most passion throughout the research. The other three themes will support the mission focus, Col. Rand said.

In characterizing the mission, Siegel & Gale concluded the Air Force is a world-class, mission-ready organization. From this, they recommended the theme "World Ready." They also devised a symbol that captured both the heritage and future of the Air Force. These were presented to Air Force leaders in November. After much discussion, the secretary and chief of staff asked that more development work be done on both the theme and the symbol.

While theme alternatives are still in development, the proposed symbol updates the Hap Arnold wings and star with a more modern, angular design.

"Many people believe the Hap Arnold emblem is the official Air Force symbol, but it isn't," Col. Rand said. "We don't have an official symbol, and never have had one. With the transition

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Col. Ron Rand
*Air Force director
of public affairs*

to the EAF and a new millennium, our leadership decided the timing is right to modernize our identity and give us an official symbol which will preserve the heritage of the Arnold wings."

During research, Air Force and public audiences saw various meanings in the new design.

"Most saw an eagle in flight and a medal of valor," he said. "Enlisted members saw their stripes and officers related to the star. Air Force people and civilians alike identified the new symbol with the Air Force's leading edge, aerospace mission."

Don't expect to see changes throughout the Air Force immediately, according to Col. Rand. "There are no final decisions on any of this yet," said Col. Rand. "We're still working through all the options on the development of the theme, the use of the sym-

bol, and the implementation of both.

"There is no intent to repaint the fleet or change all our base signs overnight," Gen. Ryan said. "When we reach a final decision on our identity, we're going to try it on for awhile as we develop a plan to roll it out with minimal disruption and cost."

"We're trying to encapsulate the essence of what it means to be in the Air Force," Secretary Peters said. "The Air Force is a wonderful organization. It offers extraordinary opportunities beyond the monetary and the educational benefits that we have been using in recruiting."

"The Air Force is a fast-paced, fun, tough, and rewarding environment. It's about teamwork, patriotic service, and belonging to a world-class organization ready to respond anywhere in the world in a matter of hours. That's what we're trying to communicate. My hope is that this identity effort will do that."



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